NEWS LESSON

The Ancient Statues Found Near Someone's Home



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What is the most interesting old object you have seen?
2. If you found a strange object in your garden, what would you do first?
3. Would you rather uncover an ancient building or a tiny personal object?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**inscribed**	☐	A	an old object made by people
2	**excavation**	☐	B	in a careful, organised way, step by step
3	**hieroglyphs**	☐	C	people who know a lot about one subject
4	**artefact**	☐	D	the pictures and symbols used in ancient Egyptian writing
5	**sacred**	☐	E	with words or marks cut into the surface
6	**reign**	☐	F	the time when a king or queen rules
7	**systematically**	☐	G	the work of digging carefully to find things from the past
8	**specialists**	☐	H	very important in a religion

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A resident of Bahbit al-Higara could have moved the inscribed stone or sold it. Instead he called the authorities, and a careful excavation began.

1 An ordinary piece of land in northern Egypt turned into an archaeological site after a resident noticed an unusual inscribed stone. Instead of trying to move it or sell it on, he contacted the authorities. The resulting excavation brought to light fragments of two huge royal statues associated with Ramesses II, along with a granite block bearing hieroglyphs.

2 The discovery was announced in October 2026 in Bahbit al-Higara, a village in the Nile Delta. The site lies close to the remains of a temple connected with Isis, an important goddess in ancient Egyptian religion. Specialists from Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities inspected the original stone and then carried out a rescue excavation. This is urgent work to record and protect a find before anything is lifted out of the ground.

3 One of the most striking finds was a statue head measuring roughly 1.6 metres high. Archaeologists estimate that the complete figure may originally have been approximately 8.5 metres tall. A head alone of that size gives some idea of the effort that went into cutting, moving and raising the finished statue. Monuments on that scale were not merely decorative. Such figures were presumably meant to be seen from a distance, and they helped communicate the authority of kings and the close relationship between royal power and religion.

4 Ramesses II ruled during the thirteenth century BC and is famous for the monumental buildings associated with his long reign. The newly discovered pieces are especially valuable because they turned up in an archaeological context. Their position, the material around them and the inscriptions may shed light on how this part of the Nile Delta developed, and on how a sacred landscape was laid out.

5 Archaeology involves far more than digging up treasure. Removing an artefact without documenting where it lay tends to destroy evidence about its history, and that evidence cannot be recovered afterwards. An object that has been pulled out of the ground by chance may still be beautiful, but it is likely to tell researchers very little.

6 That is why the resident's decision to report the stone was so significant. The authorities were able to investigate the site systematically instead of being handed an isolated object with no clear background. The alternative is that finds slip quietly into private hands, taking their history with them.

7 There is still work to do before researchers can explain precisely where the statues stood and what purpose they served. They will want to compare the fragments with other monuments from the same reign before they draw any firm conclusions. Nevertheless, the find offers a reminder that the ancient world has not disappeared. Sometimes it is still hidden beneath the places where people live and work today.

Sources: Ahram Online. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Experts think the whole statue may have been over eight metres high. T F NG
2. The resident received a payment from the antiquities authority. T F NG
3. Specialists inspected the stone before they started a rescue excavation. T F NG
4. Researchers already know exactly where the statues stood. T F NG
5. The writer thinks an object found by chance is likely to teach researchers less than one found during a proper excavation. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

approximately **estimate** **evidence** **fragments** **inspected** **isolated** **presumably** **urgent**

1. The vase was broken into dozens of small _____ , which the museum staff carefully glued together.
2. The roof was leaking badly, so the repair was _____ and could not wait until spring.
3. The police found no _____ that anyone had broken into the house.
4. Doctors were not worried because it was a single, _____ incident and not part of a pattern.
5. Engineers _____ that the repairs will cost around two million pounds.
6. He was _____ the best candidate, since he had the most experience, but the interviews were not finished.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time the experts arrived, the resident _____ the authorities. (CONTACT)
2. The ruins _____ by law since they were declared a national monument. (PROTECT)
3. If the man had sold the stone, researchers _____ the statues. (NEVER FIND)
4. When the rain began, the specialists still _____ the layers of earth. (RECORD)
5. Last year, an old coin _____ in a garden in our town. (DISCOVER)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many phrasal verbs have a meaning you cannot guess from the parts. Learn the whole verb, for example look into means to investigate.

break	carry	end	forward	hold	look	out

1. The team will _____ out a rescue excavation before the builders arrive.
2. Experts will _____ into the history of the statue before they publish anything.
3. Without a record, a find can _____ up in a private collection.
4. The authorities asked the public to come _____ if they had information.
5. The archaeologist pointed _____ that the statue was once much taller.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Who should decide what happens to something old found on private land?
2. Which everyday object from today might interest people in 3,000 years?
3. Would you enjoy living near a place where history keeps turning up?

9 Role-play: what should we do with the stone?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the neighbour

Your neighbour has found a strange stone with writing on it. You think it could be worth a lot of money. Try to persuade your neighbour to keep it or sell it. Ask at least two questions.

Student B · the finder

You found a strange stone with writing on it near your home. You want to report it to the experts. Explain why, and answer your neighbour's ideas politely.

Useful phrases

I think it could be worth a lot of money.

What if it's really important?

I'd rather call the experts first.

That's not a good idea, because we don't know what it is.

Let's find out what it is before we decide.

We could both agree to ask for advice.

Afterwards, tell the class: what did you decide to do with the stone, and why?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 E · 2 G · 3 D · 4 A · 5 H · 6 F · 7 B · 8 C

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 NG · 3 T · 4 F · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 fragments · 2 urgent · 3 evidence · 4 isolated · 5 estimate · 6 presumably

6 Verb forms

1 had contacted · 2 have been protected · 3 would never have found · 4 were recording · 5 was discovered

7 Language focus

1 carry · 2 look · 3 end · 4 forward · 5 out

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